



**KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

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Ms. Lisa Schunk
Einstein Fellow
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ms Schunk:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the February 16 roundtable discussion on "Competitiveness: Building and Filling the Pipeline." Our reform agenda in Kentucky highlights that very issue. I am submitting my remarks and some additional materials, as requested, into the record.

Kentucky's education reform is built on a comprehensive legislative foundation that drives funding and strategic initiatives. In 1990, Kentucky was among the first states to embark on groundbreaking standards-based reform in K-12 education. In 1997, the Kentucky General Assembly passed the *Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act*. This legislation called for improving the standard of living and quality of life of all Kentuckians by creating an adequately funded, seamless system of education so that Kentuckians would meet or exceed the national average in educational attainment by 2020. In 2000, additional legislation set the stage for restructuring adult education and channeling it into the postsecondary system. Kentucky was unique in the nation in creating a structure that focused adult education on attracting undereducated adults back into the education system to prepare and enroll them in college. Kentucky's P-16 pipeline strategically includes both traditional P-12 and non-traditional adult students. Most recently, the *Kentucky Innovation Act* of 2000 formalized in legislation the role of postsecondary education in expanding the capacity for knowledge-driven research and development in Kentucky to attract businesses, create jobs, and prepare a skilled workforce for a globally competitive, twenty-first century economy.

From this policy framework, which continues to drive funding and strategic initiatives, the Council on Postsecondary Education (Kentucky's postsecondary education coordinating

board) has developed, in forums and meetings with constituencies across the Commonwealth, a "Public Agenda for Higher Education" that includes an accountability system organized around five questions. These five questions focus postsecondary education on outcomes ("key indicators") that will produce better lives for Kentuckians and address the goals for postsecondary reform <http://cpe.ky.gov/planning/strategic/default.htm>.

- Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?
- Is Kentucky postsecondary education affordable for its citizens?
- Do more Kentuckians have certificates and degrees?
- Are college graduates prepared for life and work in Kentucky?
- Are Kentucky's people, communities, and economy benefiting?

The first of the five questions is of particular interest for this roundtable discussion. Kentucky's postsecondary institutions are held accountable for their role in ensuring the preparation of traditional and adult students for college. Although it has taken time, the public agenda has shifted the conversation in Kentucky beyond the "blame game," where each level of education blames its failures on the inadequacies of the preceding level (e.g., employers blame colleges, which blame high schools, which blame middle schools, which blame elementary schools, which blame families). Through a variety of strategies over nearly a decade, Kentucky's education leaders are coming to understand that no part of the system can truly succeed if another fails.

Kentucky's P-16 agenda to build our educational pipeline has encompassed several initiatives.

- A State P-16 Council was established in 1999 as a voluntary collaboration between the P-12 Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Today, the P-16 Council includes representatives from all education sectors, the state's financial aid agency, government, and the private sector. The P-16 Council has focused on alignment of standards and assessment across the system, teacher quality, and strategies that support the transition of traditional and adult students upward through the system. Twenty-one local P-16 councils have been created throughout the state under the guidance of the state council to provide grassroots support for the P-16 agenda.
- In 2000, the state launched "Go Higher Kentucky," a highly successful college access marketing campaign, to address cultural barriers to educational advancement and to convince all Kentuckians that postsecondary education should be in their future. The campaign has received national and regional recognition for its quality and success. Kentucky is now working with the Southern Regional Education Board and the Southern Governor's Association to assist states throughout the south in developing similar campaigns. It also has worked with other states across the nation. The campaign produced record numbers of new adult learners pursuing the GED and college and

contributed to record college enrollments in Kentucky during this period. A Go Higher Kentucky Web portal is in place to provide what students need to plan for, prepare for, and pay for college.

- In 2000, Kentucky successfully applied for a federal GEAR UP grant that provided \$21 million in federal and matching state funds to work with low income middle/high school students and their parents and teachers to motivate, prepare, and successfully enroll them in college. In 2005, Kentucky secured a second GEAR UP grant—more than doubling the resources available for this program. P-12, postsecondary, agency, and private sector groups have partnered through GEAR UP to address P-16 challenges for low income students. To date, the program has produced academic achievement gains in our poorest schools that exceed state averages, provided scholarship guarantees to students who meet program requirements, and increased the number of low income students and their parents preparing for college attendance.
- Kentucky's focus on alignment led to its selection as one of the initial five pilot states participating in the "American Diploma Project." Sponsored by Achieve, The Education Trust, and other national groups, the first ADP pilot produced a clear set of standards defining what every high school and adult student should know in math and English to succeed in college or the skilled workplace. Based on that work, Kentucky secured agreement from all of its public postsecondary institutions on a common set of standards and a common assessment for guaranteed placement into credit-bearing mathematics and English courses across the community college and university system. Kentucky's Statewide Public Postsecondary Placement Policy clearly defines what "college readiness" in these core subject areas entails, and we are communicating this across the system (see Statewide Public Postsecondary Placement Policy brochure). Kentucky currently spends more than \$24 million per year addressing the needs of underprepared college students. Working with our middle and high school and adult learning center partners to implement these standards should reduce these costs and increase student success.
- For the last six years Kentucky has assembled teams of key faculty and staff from across university programs (e.g., education and arts and sciences colleges) to develop and implement plans to increase the quality of teacher preparation and professional development programs. The Council on Postsecondary Education is currently working with the state teacher standards board, the legislature, and the Office of the Governor to implement a redesign of these programs for teachers and school leaders following best practices identified by the SREB and other national reports. Through the work of the state's certification board, the P-12 system, and postsecondary education, Kentucky's teacher quality has improved as indicated by numerous national assessments and recognitions. Much more needs to be done, however—and it will be—to address teacher shortages and assess the effectiveness of teacher preparation and professional development

programs in producing student achievement gains tied to college and workplace readiness.

- The Kentucky Community and Technical College System, created in the postsecondary reform legislation, plays a central role in implementing the P-16 agenda. As a primary postsecondary access point for many students, the KCTCS has invested funds in high school partnerships to provide early assessment of students' college readiness and created successful early and middle college models to ease the transition from high school to college. It has been the primary provider of dual enrollment opportunities for high school students. Statewide, the number of high school students dually enrolled in college courses has grown from 9,321 in 2001-02 to 18,291 in 2004-05.

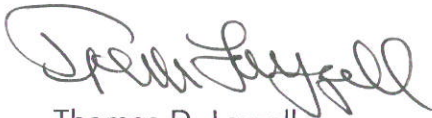
Several recent developments hold great promise to accelerate the success of P-16 work in Kentucky and address current challenges.

- In 2005, the Business Forum, made up of important private sector leaders, many of whom spearheaded the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act, issued a comprehensive report identifying and supporting a range of initiatives in education, particularly focusing on strengthening P-16 connections and programs. The support of the business community will be important in sustaining the political will to advance P-16 initiatives.
- In early 2006, the Kentucky Board of Education, following the recommendation of the State P-16 Council, voted to implement a single rigorous curriculum for all students, raising the state's high school graduation requirements and eliminating the "general track" diploma. Assessment standards also are being revised, in response to the American Diploma Project recommendations for English and mathematics, to prepare all high school graduates for college and skilled employment. The assessment system also will provide, for the first time, student-unit-level data that will better track individual student achievement across the system. Kentucky Adult Education is revising its curriculum to align with ADP benchmarks and Kentucky's Statewide Public Postsecondary Placement Policy.
- The state acquired a new federal GEAR UP grant that will allow it to double its capacity to implement successful programs for low income students developed in its first grant. Also, funding is being put in place for the next phase of the "Go Higher Kentucky" college access campaign to reach Kentuckians who still do not have college on their radar screen or who believe college is beyond their reach.
- A recent study of postsecondary affordability has produced funding and proposals for new scholarship programs that address the needs of students for whom affordability was identified as a barrier.

- Finally, in late 2005, for the first time, Kentucky's key education agencies, under the leadership of the Education Cabinet, submitted a joint budget request to integrate data and virtual learning programs. The request was submitted by the Governor for approval by the legislature. If funded, this program will allow systematic assessment of student success across the P-16 system, identification of the factors that predict success at every level, and coherent implementation of effective virtual learning programs by all agencies. We anticipate this joint proposal will be the first of many. It demonstrates the commitment of Kentucky's education system to the logic of an integrative, systemic P-16 approach to education issues.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to share some of Kentucky's initiatives with the Senate committee and your other guests.

Sincerely,



Thomas D. Layzell

Enclosures: Kentucky's Public Agenda for Postsecondary and Adult Education
Frequently Asked Questions About the Kentucky P-16 Council
Kentucky P-16 Collaboration: A Review After Six Years
Map of Kentucky's Local P-16 Councils
Kentucky's Statewide Public Postsecondary Placement Policy